



**The Universal Exaltation of the Honoured and Life-creating Cross
Which the Holy Church celebrates on September 14.**

Saint Helen, the mother of Saint Constantine the Great, when she was already advanced in years, undertook, in her great piety, the hardships of a journey to Jerusalem in search of the Cross, about the year 325. A temple to Aphrodite had been raised up by the Emperor Hadrian upon Golgotha, to defile and cover with oblivion the place where the saving Passion had been suffered. The venerable Helen had the Aphrodite destroyed and the earth removed revealing the Tomb of our Lord and three crosses. Of these it was believed that one must be that of our Lord, the other two of the thieves crucified with Him; but Saint Helen was at a loss which one might be the Wood of our salvation. At the inspiration of Saint Macarius, Archbishop of Jerusalem, a lady of Jerusalem, who was already at the point of death from a certain disease, was brought to touch the crosses and as soon as she came near to the Cross of the Lord, she was made perfectly whole. Consequently, the precious Cross was lifted on high by Archbishop Macarius of Jerusalem as he stood on the ambo and when the people beheld it, they cried out, "Lord, have mercy." It should be noted that after its discovery a portion of the venerable Cross was taken to Constantinople as a blessing. The rest was left in the magnificent Church built by Saint Helen until the year 614. At that time the Persians plundered Palestine and took the Cross to their own country (see Jan. 22 Saint Anastasius the Persian).

Later, in the year 628, Emperor Heraclius set out on a military campaign, retrieved the Cross and, after bringing it to Constantinople, himself escorted it back to Jerusalem, where he restored it to its place.

Rest from labour. A Fast is observed today, whatever the day of the week it may be.

Dismissal Hymn. First Tone

SAVE, O Lord, Thy people and bless Thine inheritance; grant Thou unto the faithful victory over adversaries. And by the power of Thy Cross do Thou preserve Thy Commonwealth.

*Kontakion. Fourth Tone
The Original Melody*

THOU Who wast raised up on the Cross of Thine own will, * O Christ our God, do Thou bestow Thy compassions * upon this, Thy new commonwealth named after Thee. * Gladden with Thy sov'reign might * our most Orthodox hierarchs, * and vouchsafe them victory * over every false teaching; * and as Thy help in war may they possess * the weapon of peace, the trophy invincible.

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A SELECTION OF HYMNS FROM
THE MENAION

MATINS

OIKOS

HE that was caught up into the third Heaven into Paradise, and heard unspeakable and divine words, which it is not lawful for the tongue to utter—that which he wrote to the Galatians, ye, as lovers of the Scriptures, have read and know: Far be it, he saith, that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord alone, on which He slew the passions by His Passion. Let us all, then, firmly hold fast to the Lord's Cross as our boast; for this Wood is our salvation, the weapon of peace, the trophy invincible.

SYNAXARION

✠ On the fourteenth of this month we commemorate the Universal Exaltation of the Honoured and Life-giving Cross.

Verses

Creation, seeing the Cross highly exalted,
Offereth Thee high praise in its throat, O Saviour.

On the fourteenth the Cross's Wood is exalted.

✠ On this day we commemorate the Appearance of the Cross over Athens in the year 1925.

Verses

A new appearance of the Cross of Light, O Saviour,
Putteth to shame them who would mingle light with darkness.

✠ On this day we commemorate the falling-asleep of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom; for it was on this day that he went to his rest, but because of the Feast of the Precious Cross his Feast hath been transferred to the month of November.

✠ On this day we commemorate the martyrdom of our Father among the Saints Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, whose Feast hath been transferred to the month of August.

✠ On this day we commemorate our Fathers among the Saints who gathered in the Holy and Sixth Ecumenical Council during the reign of Constantine the Fourth, father of Justinian the Second, while Sergius presided over the Church of Constantinople and Agatho over the Church of Rome. It was gathered in Trullo of the Palace which was called Ovatus, to put down by anathema Sergius, Pyrrhus and Peter and Paul, Bishops of Constantinople, Macrobius of Antioch and Cyrus of Alexandria, Honorius, Pope of Rome, and Stephen and

Polychronius and those with them. This Holy Council was gathered during the reign of the said Constantine the Fourth, but the publication of the canons came during the reign of his son Justinian.

Verses

Know thou the one Hypostasis of the God-man,
But acknowledge the two wills and natures.

By the intercessions of Thy Saints, O God, have mercy on us.
Amen.



And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings,
He took Peter and John and James,
and went up into a mountain to pray.
And as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered,
and His raiment was white and glistening.
And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias:
Who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease
which He should accomplish in Jerusalem.

[On Mount Tabor, forty days before the Crucifixion,
the Lord spoke with the Prophets Moses and Elias
about His death in Jerusalem on the Cross for our sake.]

St. Luke 9:28-31

While the brethren are venerating the Cross, the following hymns are chanted:

Second Tone. By the Emperor Leo

COME, O ye faithful, let us worship the life-creating Wood, whereon Christ, the King of Glory, stretching out His hands of His own will, lifted up to the ancient blessedness us whom the enemy had aforetime despoiled through pleasure, making us exiles from God. Come, O ye faithful, let us worship that Wood whereby we have been deemed worthy to crush the heads of our invisible enemies. Come, all ye kindreds of the nations, with hymns let us honour the Cross of the Lord. Rejoice O Cross, thou perfect redemption of fallen Adam. In thee do our most faithful sovereigns boast, since by thy power they have mightily subjected to themselves the Ishmaelite peoples. As we Christians now venerate thee with fear, we glorify God, Who was affixed to thee, and we say: O Lord, Who wast crucified thereon, have mercy on us, since Thou art good and the Friend of man.

Plagal of First Tone

COME, O ye people, and beholding the strange wonder, let us worship the power of the Cross. For a tree sprouted forth death in Paradise; but this one hath made life to blossom forth, since it had the sinless Lord nailed upon it, from Whom all we the nations reap incorruption as we cry: O Thou Who through the Cross hast abolished death and hast made us free, glory be to Thee.

Same Tone

O GOD, fulfilled is the voice of Thy Prophets Esaias and David, which saith: All the nations shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord. For behold Thy people, O Good One, which hath been filled with Thy grace in Thy courts at Jerusalem. O Thou Who hast endured the Cross for our sakes, and dost grant us life by Thy Resurrection, preserve and save us.

Plagal of Second Tone

TODAY the Tree of Life, raised up from the hidden recesses of the earth, confirmeth the Resurrection of Christ, Who was nailed upon it. And raised by priestly hands, it declareth His Ascension into the Heavens, whereby our nature, lifted from its fall to earth, becometh a citizen of the Heavens. Wherefore, let us cry in thanksgiving: O Lord, Who wast lifted up on the Cross, and through it hast lifted us up with Thyself, vouchsafe the joy of Heaven unto us who sing Thy praise.

§ Note on this text which is found in the Septuagint, but not in the KJV.

The Septuagint was translated in Alexandria circa 250 B.C. during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus as a publication of the Library of Alexandria. This Library was the Media Center of the Roman world. Ptolemy wanted a copy of every book in the known world to be available through the Library. Accordingly, he found a way to include a translation of the hitherto untranslated Scriptures of the Jews which could be made available through the Library. Scholars who were fluent in both Hebrew and Greek travelled from Jerusalem to Alexandria to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek.

Their translation, known as the Septuagint from the seventy-two who completed this work, was praised as grasping the true meaning of the Hebrew and setting it forth in Greek by the most erudite of the Jews of that day, including Philo and Josephus. The Septuagint found such favor with the Jews that they had a celebration on an island in the Nile to mark the anniversary of its completion. The Septuagint immediately found a widespread reception in the pre-Christian literary world, notably in Rome itself. Both the authors of the New Testament and also the Fathers of the Church used the Septuagint as an authoritative source in teaching Christian doctrine. The Septuagint, abbreviated as 'LXX', is the scriptural standard for the Orthodox Church as Old Testament scripture whether in Greek or in Church Slavonic.

The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled every one of the prophecies concerning the Messiah found anywhere in the text of the Septuagint. This is the consistent witness of the Fathers from Saint Dionysius the Areopagite to Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, and beyond. Indeed, the recent discovery of St. Irenaeus' *The Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* in an Armenian Monastery was first published in a translation from Armenian into French in Paris, August 23, 1913 (Cf. § 30, p.683). St. Irenaeus' *Proof* comes down to this: "What the Scriptures prophesied, Christ fulfilled" this, then, is the keystone of the Apostolic preaching. Thus, the Lord's Resurrection on the third day, is, in the Nicene Creed, confessed to be "according to the Scriptures," that is, in fulfillment of the prophecies of Christ recorded in the Canonical Scriptures.

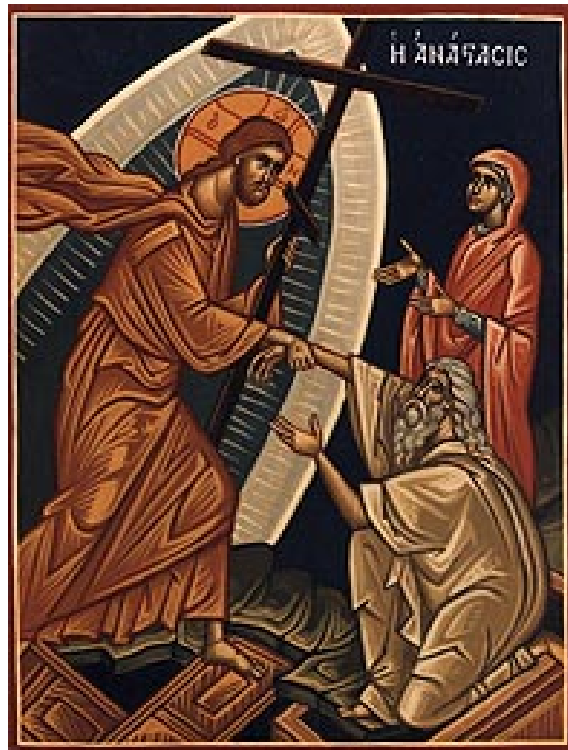
The destruction and leveling of Jerusalem, which was prophesied by Christ, (Mt. 24:2; Mar.13:2; Luk. 21:6) was accomplished under the Roman General Titus in 70 A.D. Around A. D. 90 the Jews initiated a program of eliminating, wherever possible, all of the prophecies in the Hebrew texts concerning Christ, and of a further program of reconstructing their version of the text of the Old Testament by using inferior texts. The Rabbis acted on the presumption that they could, on their recognizance, alter the texts of the Old Testament at will. As it happens, the Psalter in the Septuagint stands as that book which, more than any other in holy Scripture, is replete with prophecies of Christ. Given the widespread popularity of the Psalter, even in the first century, the Jews were limited in how far they could take their deliberate eradication of the prophecies of Christ. They chose not to alter or delete the prophecies in the Psalter quite possibly out of fear of tipping their hand as regards their extensive tampering with other texts in the Canonical Scripture of the Old Testament.

The text produced by the Jews is called the Masoretic text. Passing through several stages of rescensions, the final edition of the Masoretic text appeared around 1000 A.D. This text, stripped as far as possible of the prophecies of Christ by the Masoretes, i.e. Jewish scholarship, is the text preferred and used by the protestant world. This corrupted text stands behind the Old Testament translation into German in 1534 by Martin Luther and into the English of the 1611 King James Version.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls written in Hebrew found in the Judean wilderness circa the 1950's calls both the protestant preference for the Masoretic text and also the Jewish endeavor which produced that text, outlined above, into serious question. These scrolls dating from the first century A.D. confirm basis for the Septuagint in the Hebrew of the Qumran texts. The texts found in Qumran are in consonance with those used in the translation of the Septuagint. Further, they are dated approximately 900 years before the eleventh century rescension of the Masoretes. Each of the prophecies of Christ are in place, intact, and supported by the texts found in the Judean desert. Even apart from such modern supporting documentation for the text of the Septuagint, we can, as Orthodox Christians, continue to rely, as did the Evangelists, Apostles, and Fathers of the Church, upon the Septuagint as Canonical Scripture.

Those standing around the Cross of Christ on that day when the earth was darkened by an unexpected three hour eclipse of the sun (Luke 23:45) did indeed witness the fulfillment of this prophecy: "Ye shall see your Life hanging before your eyes" (Deut. 28:66 LXX).

And to our God be glory.



CHRIST IS RISEN